The friendship between former Senator George A. Smathers and President John F. Kennedy was firm, but often tried. Cuba was the toughest trial, as newly opened documents at the John F. Kennedy Memorial Library showed last week. From the 1960 presidential campaign onward, Smathers urged Kennedy to take a hard line against Cuba. The President listened until the Bay of Pigs invasion, after which he told his friend: "George, I don't want you to talk to me any more about Cuba." Smathers stopped—for a while. But one evening at an informal supper, Smathers says: "I raised the question of Cuba and what could be done. He took his fork and hit his plate, and it cracked and he said, 'Now dammit! Let's quit talking about this subject.' " Smathers did.

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